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SUBJECT: UN GENERAL DEBATE: VENEZUELA, ERITREA AND OTHERS

REF: USUN 831

**¶1. SUMMARY:** In the final plenary session of the 63rd UNGA General Debate on September 29, speakers included: Ireland, Ethiopia, Belize, Nigeria, South Africa, Eritrea, Thailand, Canada, Cambodia, Venezuela, New Zealand, Belarus, Switzerland, Mauritius, Maldives, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sweden, Ethiopia and the Holy See. Ethiopia and Eritrea gave rights of reply. The President of the General Assembly gave remarks at the end of the debate urging the end of "business as usual" in the UNGA. Countries continued to address the themes of poverty; the global financial, food, oil and environmental crises; UN reform; and calls to reinvigorate commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The afternoon was interposed with speeches disparaging U.S. policies - notably Eritrea accusing the U.S. of "meddling" in the Horn of Africa and beyond and Venezuela blaming U.S. hegemony and its misguided "magic remedies" of unregulated capitalism for today's global economic woes. Video and texts are available at [www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate](http://www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate). END SUMMARY.

VENEZUELA: "RELIGION OF NEOLIBERALISM" HAS FAILED

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**¶2.** Blaming the global financial crisis on greed, "magic remedies" imposed by international financial institutions, and the imposition of neoliberal policies by a "global dictatorship" of ruling elites, Venezuela argued for a more regulated and "socially just" form of capitalism. Venezuela's representative sympathized with the "millions of brothers and sisters in the United States who have been swindled by the ruling class." Despite freer, more transparent elections throughout Latin America today, U.S. "fundamentalists" on the right (whom Venezuela suggested do not love democracy as much as they claim) refuse to accept the results unless the winner also subscribes to their neoliberal ideology, the speaker said. Those on the right use media outlets like Fox News to smear leftist democracies in countries like Venezuela and Bolivia, which the speaker welcomed into the "axis of evil" following its recent elections. Venezuela charged that "bellicose taunting" of Moscow by war-like countries and alliances since the break-up of the Soviet Union instigated the Georgia conflict. He proclaimed, "The Russian Bear has stopped hibernating."

ERITREA: U.S. POLICIES TO BLAME FOR GLOBAL ILLS

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**¶3.** Eritrea catalogued ongoing conflicts throughout the world, including Georgia, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East, claiming, "Many of them have been exacerbated, if not instigated, by the misguided and domineering policies of the U.S. Government." He accused the United States of deliberately fomenting conflicts and allowing them to fester as a means to exert its control. Eritrea cited Somalia, the Sudan and support for Ethiopia's "aggression" as examples of U.S. "meddling" in the Horn of Africa. Eritrea pointed to Ethiopia regarding problems with the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, and unrest in Somalia. Ethiopia gave a

right of reply, refuting Eritrea's territorial claim and saying that problems with the Boundary Commission can be traced to Eritrea's "ruthless regime." Ethiopia also argued that its forces were in Somalia as the invited peacekeepers of the Transitional Federal Government. Eritrea then followed with a right of reply to say that it had cooperated with the Boundary Commission and to reiterate its claim to the territories that Ethiopia occupied.

D'ESCOTO'S CLOSING REMARKS

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¶4. The President of the General Assembly gave closing remarks that were moderate compared to his first address to the General Assembly (Reftel). He urged no more "business as usual" at the United Nations in order to introduce the changes that will reflect the UN Charter statement "We the peoples." D'Escoto lauded the many statements made in support of actions to overcome the current global crises and particularly praised the interventions that called for specific actions to counter food security. Finally, he asked that Member States set aside "petty" differences and join forces in the months ahead.

Khalilzad